



TRAILS
SUNWARD

CALE YOUNG RICE



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TRAILS SUNWARD



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BY

CALE YOUNG RICE

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"COLLECTED PLAYS AND POEMS," ETC.



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AFFECTIONATELY
TO
W. PETT RIDGER



PREFACE

Never has poetry tried so hard to be prose as at the present time in America. Weary of being banned to the limbo of the inconspicuous, it has adopted, via Paris, some illegitimate offspring of Whitman's ideas, and thus "ismed" and calling itself the "new poetry," it whacks all that has hitherto been held as making for the poetic.

To the experienced these new "isms" are but aspects of a general and unrestrained reaction toward realism. Even in form this is so. Their broken prose rhythms, suitable perhaps to the unaccented French tongue, but lacking the deep music of such true free verse as Whitman has immortalized, makes us aware of the fact that "free verse realism" is the name which is perhaps most appropriate to them all.

Yet the purpose of these realists, when it has been sincere, has been useful: for every poet of experience knows that he must constantly revert to free verse and realism in order to avoid tightness of technique or academicism. When, however, they have been insincere, when they have been aware of palming off broken prose, or when their impulse has been merely symptomatic of a desire to do something new, startling, or "American," in order to keep their heads above the flood of books poured in from abroad, the result has been deplorable.

For a wave of interest in poetry, such as a dozen years of achievement has brought into existence at the present time, can easily be dissipated. No poetic public will long give attention to a realism which makes the mistake, common to all shallow realism, of neglecting passion, imagination, charm and nearly all the permanent qualities of any true poetry. "Prose syntax" and "natural speech" are good — and many of us, remembering Wordsworth, have never forgotten to use them. But in

the hands of these realists they become strangely self-conscious and artificial.

Nor can the criticism of these realists, each of whom writes up the other's work from some point of vantage in various newspapers or magazines, prove less deleterious. For one of the troubles with poetry in America is that it is too often reviewed by poets—who cannot in one case out of a hundred be trusted with that task.

Neither this excessive realism nor the exploitation of it will suffice to relieve our situation. Our difficulties are deeper. We must have a truer and greater freedom than can be given by any change of verse form. We must exact a profounder grasp of life than any rude externalism permits. We must ask a finer sincerity than that to fact. In truth the solution for us lies in a thorough absorption of all great art values, and in a maturer and less restless living of our poetic life generally.

CALE YOUNG RICE.

Louisville, Ky.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE TRAIL FROM THE SEA	3
A MOTHER'S CRY TO HER KIND	8
NEW DREAMS FOR OLD	12
AN INDIAN'S PRAYER	14
THE MAD PHILOSOPHER	19
THE CHANT OF THE COLORADO	23
MOUNTAINS IN THE GRAND CANYON	26
A DANCER	28
A WORKER — OUT OF WORK	30
THE PLAINSMAN	32
THE SACRILEGE OF SYLVETTE	34
IN A CANYON OF THE SANTA INEZ	46
WRAITHS OF DESTINY	48
I THE FORESEERS	48
II THE OUTCASTS	54
III THE RESTORERS	61
HAFIZ AT FORTY	69
CECILY	73
VALHALLA	75
FAIR FIGHT	77
A WIND-MILL	79

CONTENTS

	PAGE
TO MY SISTER C. R. S.	81
OLD WANTS	85
TRANSMUTATIONS	87
POETIC EPIGRAMS	90
HOPE	90
THE YOUNG MOON	90
THE FAITHLESS	91
GHOSTLINESS	91
AUTUMN SADNESS	91
PILGRIMS	91
HOLY ORDERS	92
LOVE LETTERS RETURNED IN SPRING	92
AGE AND DEATH	92
THE DEAD THINKER	92
SPRING HAD LOST HER WAY	93
THE SALE	95
THE IDEALIST EXPLAINS	98
IN A GORGE OF THE SIERRAS	100
THE SALVATION ARMY	102
THE GRAPES OF GOD	104
A PAINTER — OF HIS DEAD RIVAL	105
A WIFE, UNLOVED	107
SONGS TO A. H. R.	109
SWALLOWS	109
IN A DARK HOUR	111
TWILIGHT CONTENT	112
TOGETHER	113

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE SONG OF MUEZZIN ABOU	114
TIDALS	116
A CHILD AGAIN	117
SANTA BARBARA	119
THE HOUSE OF LONELY LOVE	121
IN THE SHRINE OF ALL	123
A TIMELESS REFRAIN	125
MIGRATION	126
A MAID, DYING	128
ON THE CAMINO REALE	130
THE WIVES OF ENGLAND	132
THE TILLING	134
A LOVER, TO DEATH	136
METAPHYSICAL SONNETS	137
SPACE	137
TIME	138
EARTH	139
MIND	140
ERGO	141
TO THE MASTERS OF EUROPE	142
THE THRESHING FLOOR	143
A LITANY	144

TRAILS SUNWARD



THE TRAIL FROM THE SEA

I took the trail to the wooded canyon,

The trail from the sea:

For I heard a calling in me,

A landward calling irresistible in me:

*Have done with things of the sea — things of the
soul;*

*Have done with waters that slip away from under
you.*

*Have done with things faithless, things unfathom-
able and vain;*

With the vast deeps of Time and the Hereafter.

Have done with the fog-breather, the fog-beguiler;

With the foam of the never-resting.

Have done with tides and passions, tides and mysteries for a season.

Have done with infinite yearnings cast adrift on infinite vagueness —

With never a certain sail, never a rudder sure for guidance,

With never a compass-needle free of desire.

*For the ways of earth are good, as well as sea-ways,
The peaks of it as well as ports unknown.*

Not only perils matter, stormy perils, over the pathless,

Not only the shoals that sink your ship of dreams.

Not only the phantom lure of far horizons,

Not only the windy guess at the goals of God.

But morning matters, and dew upon the rose,

And noon, shadowless noon, and simple sheep on the pastures straying.

*And toil matters, amid the accustomed corn,
And peace matters, the valley-spirit of peace, un-
prone to wander,
Unprone to pierce to the world's end — and past it.
And zephyrs matter, that never lift up a sail,
Save that of the thistle voyaging over the meadow.
And the lark — oh — the sunny lark — as well as
the songless petrel,
Who cries the foamy length of a thousand leagues.
And silence matters, silence free of all surging,
Silence, the spirit of happiness and home.*

*And oh how much the laugh of a child mat-
ters:
More than the green of an island suddenly lit by
sun at dawn.
And friends, the greetings of friends, how they
matter:
More than ships that meet and fling a wild ahoy and
pass,
On any alien tides however enchanted.*

*And the face of love, the evening face of love, at a
window waiting,
Shall ever a kindled Light on any long-unlifting
shore,
Shall ever a Harbor Light like that light matter?*

*Ah no! so enough of the sea and the soul for a
season.*

*Too long followed they leave life as a dream,
Reality as a mirage when port is made.*

*"Ever in sight of the human," is the helm-word of
the wisest,*

*For earth is not earth to one upon the flood of
infinity;*

*To the eye, then, it is but an atom-star, adrift, and
oh,*

No longer warm with the beating of countless hearts.

*No longer warm with the human throb — the simple
breath of to-day,*

With yester-hours or the near dreams of to-morrow.

*No longer rich with the little innumerable blooms
of brief delights,*

Nor all divinely drenched with sympathy.

*No longer green with the humble grass of duties
that must grow,*

To clothe it against desert aridity.

*No longer zoned with the air of hope, no longer
large with faith —*

No longer heaven enough — if Heaven fails us!

A MOTHER'S CRY TO HER KIND

At a hovel window hot and bare,
A baby on her breast,
And hungry others fretting the air
That fetid scents obsessed,
A mother bitter and bent with want
Stared at a squalid street,
And said to herself — and to her kind —
With sickening repeat:

“Don't ever have a child,
If you are married poor.
Don't ever have a little child
And make your misery sure.
For two will come, and three, and four,
To eat one crust of bread:

And grind as you will in poverty mill
You'll wish that you were dead.

"Don't ever have a child,
If you must cook and scrub
And wash your soul, all day long,
Into the clothes you rub.
For the sight of children bred in want,
The cry of their distress,
Will make you long to be but a beast
Out in the wilderness.

"Don't ever have a child.
In winter there is cold,
In summer there is fever and death —
And a face laid in the mold.
And then another — coming to fill
Its sallow hungry place,
And suck at your breast and drain the life
And hope out of your face.

“ Don't ever have a child.

Your husband, down and dumb,
Will take to drink, and, out of work,

Win you a beggar's crumb.

Or beat you — till a cancer grows

Where once you had a breast,
And your days will be a bitterness,
And your nights will be unrest.

“ Don't ever have a child.

Leave children to the rich,
And eat your lonely bread for strength

To rise out of the ditch.

For do not think the proud and strong

Believe you grovel there
For any reason than that worth
Has justice everywhere.

“ Don't ever have a child.

Don't set God's image on

A wizened sickly face that death
Or crime shall hold in pawn.
For almshouse door and prison cell
Are made for children who
Are born — in beds of poverty —
Of such as me and you."

NEW DREAMS FOR OLD

Is there no voice in the world to come crying,

“New dreams for old!

New for old!”?

Many have long in my heart been lying,

Faded, weary, and cold.

All of them, all, would I give for a new one.

(Is there no seeker

Of dreams that were?)

Nor would I ask if the new were a true one:

Only for new dreams!

New for old!

For I am here, half way of my journey,

Here with the old!

All so old!

And the best heart with death is at tourney,

 If naught new it is told.

Will there no voice, then, come — or a vision —

 Come with the beauty

 That ever blows

Out of the lands that are called Elysian?

 I must have new dreams!

 New for old!

AN INDIAN'S PRAYER

(At the Grand Canyon)

Gulf of the Great Sun-Spirit,
Within whose deeps mountain-pueblos rise,
Or mountain-tepees vast for His abiding;
Gulf which the Colorado's quivering arrow-water
pierces,
Deeper and deeper pierces, from its mountain-might
shot forth,
Hear the cry of your people who are passing!

The Pale-face came in his prow across the ocean,
The Pale-face came with his plows across the plains.
He swept the primitive years back, as a herd is swept
by fire,

The Indian years away, into the sunset,
And now they are dying from the world forever.

For the master of earth was he — and we as children!
The trails he has run across it are of steel, strong
and enduring;

And a giant bison, the monster locomotive, draws his
burden —

Snorting across the prairies and the mountains.

And he feeds it rock from the earth — out of the
earth he calls up water,

To quench its thirst when river and lake are spent.

And he builds him lodges — mighty and hung with
trophies!

They are of stone, and tower, O Gulf, sunward,
Like these of yours that were not made by hands.

And he brings the stars down out of the heavens to
light them,

And snares invisible powers to work their will.

For the master of earth is he — and we papooses!
Our voice, on the war-path, dies at a sough of wind,
But his is whispered across the storms and wars of a
continent!
For the air is his, too; and he makes him wings to
soar upon it,
To rise and scorn the eagle far beneath him.

Yet hear O Gulf, and hear, Great Spirit in it,
Thy people, who are coyotes now, that hunger be-
yond the campfires,
And know they can never take their place beside
them!
Who feed on the bones the Pale-face leaves when
he hews new trails before him,
Feed — and ever are fewer upon the pastures!

Hear, ere we pass away to other Hunting, and
Hoping,
Ere you shall take our memory to your silence;

Hear, hear, and raise from among us one last
Chieftain,
Great as a Pale-face, in his arts and speakings,
To utter our race's reason to the years.

For we would not die from the wild lands of our
fathers:
Our long home — ere the Pale one with his homes
made us homeless:
And be forgot as a smoke of yesterday.
We would not die, O Spirit, not fade from it,
Ere a supreme one, with race-wisdom girdled, arise
to us,
And reveal how we have passed into our Conqueror.

For wildness have we taught him such as the deer
feels,
And primitive freedom to his freedom added;
And our silentness, from the Indian years gathered,

Under no wigwam, save of the moon or sun,
We have lent him, O deep Gulf of the Great Sun-
Spirit,
And mightier made him for his destinies.

THE MAD PHILOSOPHER

They let him wander as he will
By wood and river, vale and hill,
Tho snapped by madness are the strings
Of his wan mind's imaginings.

And often his sad spirit's breath
Will chant of life and love and death,
Twanging upon the broken ends
Of strings that some chance moment mends.

"The harlot moon still clings to earth,"
He croons, "tho love's of little worth.
Cold as the spirit of a star
Her lips and eyes and bosom are. . . .

"Within some sky beyond the sky
There is a whisper Why, Why, Why?
If I could climb the wind to it,
Of frenzy earth should soon be quit. . . .

"A person lives that men call God.
I caught him once within a clod.
He is not really God at all,
But only atoms that can crawl. . . .

"Hey diddle, many sorrows be
Within the womb of destiny.
That's why the thrush will chant all day —
To keep from hearing men who pray. . . .

"The sweet sweet herb of happiness
Grows ever less and less and less.
I'm sure it is because men look
At their own image in the brook. . . .

"A bride is such a lily thing;
She lets you bind her with a ring.

I see Queen Gwin and Lancelot —
But Arthur's face is all a blot. . . .

"Lean down and I will tell you why
The stars are lighted in the sky.
They are for tapers on the bier
Of — hush! don't say it: He is near. . . .

"The owl is hooting what o'clock
The Judgment Day at last shall knock.
But time who whips us to the grave
Is the one savior who can save. . . .

"I'll vow it, tho to Hell I'm sunk:
God with the whole world's tears is drunk.
That's why He is not God at all
But only atoms that can crawl. . . .

"Ay, doubt! But when the lightning's knout
Splits the sky's skull do Brains fall out?
There's sun and moon and sky and sea
And worm and ape — and you and me. . . .

“ Yet if you love a maid then all
The atoms do not seem to crawl
So heartlessly: tho why it is
Can be no business of His.” . . .

So sings he in the little while
That health again half on him smiles,
Twanging the sadly broken strings
Of his poor mind's imaginings.

THE CHANT OF THE COLORADO

(At the Grand Canyon)

My brother, man, shapes him a plan
And builds him a house in a day,
But I have toiled through a million years
For a home to last alway.
I have flooded the sands and washed them down,
I have cut through gneiss and granite.
No toiler of earth has wrought as I,
Since God's first breath began it.
High mountain-buttres I have chiselled, to shade
My wanderings to the sea.
With the wind's aid, and the cloud's aid,
Unweary and mighty and unafraid,
I have bodied eternity.

My brother, man, builds for a span:

His life is a moment's breath.

But I have hewn for a million years,

Nor a moment dreamt of death.

By moons and stars I have measured my task —

And some from the skies have perished:

But ever I cut and flashed and foamed,

As ever my aim I cherished:

My aim to quarry the heart of earth,

Till, in the rock's red rise,

Its age and birth, through an awful girth

Of strata, should show the wonder-worth

Of patience to all eyes.

My brother, man, builds as he can,

And beauty he adds for his joy,

But all the hues of sublimity

My pinnacled walls employ.

Slow shadows iris them all day long,

And silvery veils, soul-stilling,

The moon drops down their precipices,

Soft with a spectral thrilling.

For all immutable dreams that sway

With beauty the earth and air,

Are ever at play, by night and day,

My house of eternity to array

In visions ever fair.

MOUNTAINS IN THE GRAND CANYON

Each a primeval vastness, shaped by hands
Whose cosmic strength carved idly then forgot,
In half-created awfulness here stands,
For sun and wind and cloud and rain to rot.
No chaos do they seem, but as the work
Of a lone God, or one to purpose blind —
Who could not his creative urgency shirk,
Yet without love or hope has wrought his mind.

And man was not, when first their mythic shapes
Emerged phantasmal in the Great Gulf's terror;
Nor shall man be when the last silence drapes
Their desolation's drear and deathless error.
For supra-human, supra-mundane, sunk

In dread indifference, they heedless sit —
Abortive rock from whence all soul has shrunk,
Abandoned quarry of The Infinite.

A DANCER

Beautiful as a wave before it breaks,
And troubling as a wave when it has broken,
You are as one whose luring spirit wakes
Desire so deep it never can be spoken.
You are as one to whom men sing a pæan
Of praise, then long to strangle with wild throes,
For the body of you is as a thing Circean,
Your heart a mystery that no man knows.

Beautiful as a gull that breasts the waters
Then goes upon swift wings across the sea,
You are as one of Time's eternal daughters
Who never give desire satiety.
Your feet go through the hearts of men, and flowers

Of passion spring, to haunt them till they die;
For you were framed by those elusive powers
That made Eve for more bliss than Eden sigh.

A WORKER — OUT OF WORK

Jesus Christ was a laboring man — and a willing
one, may be,

Who did not seek a fair day's shift to shirk.
But Jesus Christ with a wife and children never
tramped like me
The streets all day and night in search of work.

Jesus Christ was a laboring man, and he said, "To
Cæsar give

All 's due": but he never heard his children cry
Because of want of an alms of work to get them
bread to live —

Mere bread that a million drones have but to *buy*!

Jesus Christ was a laboring man — who dwelt
among the poor,

And taught them God, the Father: but I say
That now he would teach that *man*, the father, never
should endure

A workless destitution day by day.

Jesus Christ was a laboring man — and he cursed
the rich and proud,

And flung the money-changers out in the sun.
But if he had waked in the night and heard his wife
moaning aloud

With a starved babe at her breast, what would he
have done?

Jesus Christ was a laboring man — and it may be
that he saw

How many sweat till the soul is numb and dead.
But *were* he the Christ to-day, the lords of the world
would quake with awe

When a strong man wanting work is starved for
bread.

THE PLAINSMAN

I'm out again in the great spaces,
Far from men and the little places,
I'm out again where the heart faces
The lone plains and the skies.

I'm out with the wind no hand can saddle;
Out and away from wants that raddle;
Out where the striding sun can straddle
The world.

And oh I'm full of scornful pities
For dwellers in streets and narrow cities;
For the trade-songs, and trade-ditties,
They chant.

And I wish I could smite out of creation
The lie they call their civilization,—
A lie that is but soul-dissipation,
Soul-deceit and cant.

I 'm out again in the great spaces,
Far from men and the little places,
I 'm out again where the heart faces

The lone night and the stars.

And I wish I knew how to untether
All pent lives to the wide world-weather,
And say, "Come, come, let us ride together
Away."

For one hour's sense of the infinite prairie
Is better than all the years men bury
In crowded walls, sad, mad, or merry

Or vain.

And one star's light has more of Heaven,
Has more in it of the great God-leaven,
Than the seventy myriad lights and seven,
Cities beget, for gain.

THE SACRILEGE OF SYLVETTE

(*Martinique, 1902*)

I

April on Martinique;
Day's end, and the moon,
Trimming her slender bows to ride
The soft clouds scarlet-strewn.
Two in a tropic shade
Above Saint Pierre's sickle
That reaps the breakers at their feet,
White breakers, Caribbean and sweet
With the foam's plunge and trickle.

Two in a tropic shade;
Sylvette, "the Nightingale,"
And Raymond dark with the sea's tan,

But both with love pale.
Sylvette, the Nightingale,
And he born to the sea
On the other side of Mont Pelée
Whose jungled slopes gave that day
No gleam of destiny.

For long had the fair isle
Been held in a deep trance,
As if the sea clasping it round
Had found at last romance —
A mystic blue romance
So dear, in the embrace —
That like the yearning lovers there
It seemed no more to be aware
Of Pelée's scarry face.

And so, as the moon dipt
And rose and dipt again;
As all the odorous dusk
Swept through the clinging twain;

As all the tropic stir
Of passion trembling grew —
Sylvette lay in her lover's arms
And both were speechless with the charms
That night around them threw.

Until, "Sylvette," fell low
From Raymond's parted lips,
"My ship to-morrow, with the dawn,
Out of the roadstead slips."
He said no more, but gazed
Into her Creole eyes.
A pensive palm above them waved
One plume against the skies.
The want between them was the want
That ever in love lies.

So deep she gave it back,
His look of want, of passion.
Until a sudden terror shook
Her lips, that grew ashen.

And, "Non, Raymond," she said,
Loosing his hand that pressed
Too close around her tenderness,
Too near unto her breast,
"Non, non, ami! I love you, but —"
Her throat refused the rest.

But his low voice went on,
"To-night! give me to-night!
Your mother sleeps, oh my petite.
Grant me this one delight.
Come with me through the hedge
Of husht hibiscus flowers
To the little hidden chapel there
Amid deserted bowers —
Hidden and waiting for our love,
Nestled in the night hours."

His words were Nature's own,
Pleading with deep desire.
Yet she looking at Mont Pelée

Beheld it grow dire,—
Though no sign from it fell,
Above the city's sickle,
That lay studded with lights below:
So strength out of her seemed to flow
And fate within to trickle.

Till soon her full heart felt
That rather than refuse
Her lover love she would all life
And Life Eternal lose.
And how else could she choose?
For was not the wide night
One vast sweet mystery to make
All things that love does right?
She kissed him yieldingly, and went —
In dumb Mont Pelée's sight.

Yet scarcely had they slipt
Under the scented shade

To where the little chapel-roof
A blot of purple made;
Scarce had they trembled in,
Where none now ever came,
Than Pelée, long extinct, sent up
From a slow heart of flame
A slender omen-puff of smoke —
The first in a dread game.

II

The hours pass, it is dawn.
And on the sea's fairway
Sylvette is watching a silver ship
Through dark smoke drift away.
Sylvette at her window-sill,
With rose and jessamine sick —
Her soul tangled in the shame mesh
Of her remorseful guilty flesh,
Her brain with fears thick.

The hot sun finds her so.
And spent now is the spell.
Dread seems the little chapel-roof,
And dread the matin-bell.
For as the sweet sound quivers
Within her, resonant,
The earth beneath her faintly shivers
And out of Pelée dark smoke-rivers
Sudden begin to pant.

And somewhere under her
She hears a Creole-cry.
Then a fear-murmur from the streets
That down below her lie.
And many an anxious eye
She sees turn to the North
Where Pelée writes upon the sky
A warning to the gazing throng
To fly, fly, fly!

A warning brief — and then
Seeming to pass away,
Though still a little dust falls
Volcanic day by day.
A pallid sift of dust
That turns the green to gray,
And that upon Sylvette's sick cheek
As on her heart, remorse-weak,
A terror seems to lay.

But still the city's sickle
Reaps the white breakers in,
And many mocking at all fear
Lift up a lavish din.
And these Sylvette passing
One day cries out against,
As a Cassandra sudden cries,
Out of her guilt's harassing,
“You know not what you do! Fly!
Or soon — be recompenst!

“ For I ”— she meant to tell
Her sin there in the chapel,
Since it was seeming now to her
As Eve’s, after the Apple.
But their hot laughing lips
Hushed her, and as she went
They cried “ Old Pelée at his worst
Can only add dust to our thirst! ”
And so they drank unspent.

But she, the night through, tossed
Upon her torrid bed.
For there had come into her heart
A thought, horror-fed.
A thought that she had sinned
Against the Holy Ghost —
There in the Shrine had taken love
Where men had sought the Host.
And she was strangled in the stain
As in a sea almost.

So when dawn rose again —
Dawn stifled with wan dust
Poured out of Pelée's poison throat
Whence lightnings now were thrust,
She cried, "I will! I must!
For Wrath on them is coming.
Because of this hot sin of mine
The hordes of Hell are humming.
To the people I will tell my shame,
Its awful guilt summing."

So out of doors she ran,
Half-clothed, her white breasts bare,
Snatching the dust of Pelée up
To strew her brow and hair,
And crazedly chanting, crying —
She, once the Nightingale —
"Hear me, oh people, hear! and fly!
Or soon you will be dying,
For I have sinned the sin of sins,
On the altar of Christ lying!

“ On the altar of Christ and Mary
Taking my love and lust!
And God shall destroy the world for it,
See now His burning dust.”
And they about her listened
And some with fear were gray
As her frenzied eyes glistened —
And some to Mont Pelée
Looked up as if to heed her word
And haste from there away.

But doom comes of delaying.
And doom came now — so swift
That with a groaning angry heave
The whole isle seemed to lift,
And from the side of Pelée
A hurricane tongue burst,
A hurricane tongue of singeing gas —
A fiery wind, accurst —
That swept them — and the city —
Ere they could moan “ alas ”!

And it took Sylvette and strangled
Her little crying throat,
And all the thousands with her
And the few that heard her note
Of piteous mad repentance,
For in all Saint Pierre
But one was left to tell Raymond
What thing had happened there —
To tell him, when he staggered back,
Of Pelée's awful flare. . . .

And now when April comes
And day's end and the moon,
Trimming her slender bows to ride
The soft clouds scarlet-strewn,
You may behold him wander
Amid the ruined maze;
But no word has he for you —
Only a ruined gaze;
For he is seeking his Sylvette —
And so will seek, always.

IN A CANYON OF THE SANTA INEZ

(California)

Swift mountain-water purling far below me,
Stupendous granite piercing high above,
The sea spread out in lucent gray behind me,
Framed by the live-oaks gnarled and mossy round
me.

Upon it Santa Cruz's shadowy summits,
Islanded by the mists as by the waves;
Another world's they seem, miraged a moment,
Another world's — and vanished as I gaze.

The sunlight casting mile-long purple shadows,
That drench the chaparral with cooling gloom.

The shimmery peaks pine-edged against the brightness,
ness,

The canyuncitos for the eagle's eyrie.

Down, down, far down, the wet-lipped waters calling,

Giving a voice to rugged solitudes,

To granite cliffs as moveless as dead ages

And mighty with repressed omnipotence.

Omnipotence? Ah yes, for every shoulder

Of the high range holds off the infinite,

The blue-pressed infinite in which are hidden

Star-weight and moon-weight and God-weight together.

The precipices shudder with such steepness

As strikes the heart beholding deathly still.

Within their dark crevasses creeps the eternal

And chaos yet exerts its primal will.

WRAITHS OF DESTINY

(A Phantasy, in Three Revelations)

I

THE FORESEERS

(June, 1914)

[A chamber — or the vast apparition of a chamber — extending under the whole of Europe — whose outlines, country by country, are spectrally visible on its overarching cavity. What appears to be light pervades it; and it is thronged with the phantoms of all who have ever died for humanity. The eyes of these phantoms are turned anxiously to the rear where a rock-like incline seems to lead up toward earth, and where there is a mysterious tripod on which is enthroned Life, the

pythia of the Immanent God, swept through by innumerable forces. Around her are her ministers Heredity — preternaturally human; Chance — awed from perpetual oscillation between evil and good; and Death, darkly incarnate. Premonition and awe seem to dominate all alike, in spite of their different natures, and Heredity is speaking.

HEREDITY. Let there be answer, O Immortal One,
To me your lawful minister!

CHANCE [*starting*]. Or me!

Lawless in all things!

DEATH [*slowly*]. Or to dreaded me!

[*The throng sways.*]

HEREDITY. For ages I have woven as you willed,
Meshing the hearts of the vast myriads,
Who people all this continent above us,
With peace, hope and hate and greed and love.
And many were the evils of my task

Of threading the generations to your thought,
But still I toiled, trusting the fair intent
Of all your deeds would dawn for humankind.
Yet now —

CHANCE. Now —

DEATH. Now —

HEREDITY. *Shall this thing be?*
[*The throng quivers.*]

CHANCE [*still immovable*].

Yea, shall it be? this horror that now looms
So wide that even I, the all-unheeding,
Who bring to millions fortune, millions fate,—
I faint to know?

DEATH [*hollowly*]. And I — who minister
And master for you when none other can?
Yet who am now astounded: *Shall it be?*

[*LIFE gives no answer.*]

HEREDITY [*drawing nearer*]. Still you are tongue-
less and your emanations
Float on as ever to unwitting earth!
And yet I ask again shall all the warp

And woof of yearning ages be undone?
All the great dream of progress that has clothed
The nakedness of bestiality
In man, your highest creature? All the hope
Of human brotherhood, the one divine
And sacred vision none shall ever mar,
Save with remorse, thro the arrestless years?
Speak!

DEATH. Yea! for I am due again on earth,
Where I must whisper it among the nations.
Shall there be Peace or War!

THE THRONG [*with a vast murmur*]. Still, Peace?
or War?

[*LIFE sits as before.*]

HEREDITY [*with disquiet that is now unendurable*].

Break silence, O Unfathomable One!
Yea! or I cry you heedless — or of good
Or ill; and serve no longer — minister
No more to your immitigable mind.

CHANCE. And I! For worse than my wild-striking ways

Is this void apathetic voicelessness.

DEATH [*rising strangely*]. And I! . . . Yet stay!
stay!

I scent, at last,
Some intimation, mute, impalpable,
Coming from whence I know not, that the hour
Of revelation is at hand. . . . Yet where?

[*The throng is shaken.*]

CHANCE. Yea, where? . . . where?

HEREDITY. O Life, at last speak! where?

LIFE [*whose lips for the first time open*].

Ye importuners! seekers to foreknowledge
Of this most treasonable tragedy
That ever has befallen to earth's years,
Hush and look up, for the To-Be begins.
And, lo, its passion which shall stain all things
Sweeps even now above our haunted heads.

[*They look: a shadow is sweeping
Austria and Servia.*]

Now are ye answered?

CHANCE [*in terror*]. Yea!

DEATH [*starting*]. War! . . . It is War!

[*A shot rings down through the vastness*].

And I must up — to ride the battlefields!

[*The shadow turns crimson.*]

LIFE. Ai, go! For I who am the maker of men

No longer am their master — as oft-times

I've seemed. But Devastation, like a ghoul

Of the Universe, will glut now with despair

And grief and murder and all misery

Its mystic and illimitable maw.

O man, wild thorn within the flesh of God!

[*As her words die out DEATH is speeding
away toward earth. Then the chamber,
grown dim, suddenly melts in phantasmal
darkness. After which there is nothing-
ness.*]

II

THE OUTCASTS

(June, 1915)

[A hollow, high up in what resemble the mountains of Alpine Europe, where never a human foot has fallen. It is crepuscular with night, sadness, mystery and fear — a place supernatural, where the semblance of earth and air exist, or seem to exist from time to time, but as constantly vanish in a whirl of blinding invisibility.]

Through it, after a long trembling as of unseen forces, a wail comes which seems to cause a wider lifting of the obscurity. Then huddled together in the rocky center, where a tree overhangs a lake of phantom water, are seen a Naiad, a Faun, a

Gnome, a Sylph, a Peri, and two veiled Figures: one with a broken Cross on its breast, the other with a quenched torch. They are swaying to and fro, and as they do so the spirit of the place, which is that of Solitude, seems to rise up questioningly behind them, and after a little to speak.

SOLITUDE. Who are ye? speak! who are ye, one
and all,

Here in this emptiness unbreathed before?

THE NAIAD [*with a moan*]. I am a Nymph!

THE FAUN. And I a Faun!

THE SYLPH. I, Air!

[*Swooning away.*]

If still I be at all!

SOLITUDE [*to the Peri*]. And who are you?

THE PERI [*quailing*]. A stranger, but a friend!

Drive me not back!

For I am terrified!

THE GNOME [*wildly*]. And I! . . . I!

[*Has risen, but again sinks back.*]

SOLITUDE. Of whom? I do not understand? [*To the veiled Ones.*] Whom fear ye?

HE-WITH-THE-CROSS. I have no thing to say, save that I too

Am one driven like these from out my place.

HE-WITH-THE-TORCH. Nor I! For I am quenched upon the earth,

The nations have forsaken me!

SOLITUDE. The nations?

[*The night dissolves them.*]

THE FAUN [*as they reappear*]. O yea, we have been driven from our haunts

Of sea and air and forest — and men's souls —

By a blind tide — of blood!

THE NAIAD. That sweeps the world!

[*Her hair falls over her.*]

SOLITUDE. Of blood?

THE NAIAD. Wild blood! It stained my wells and rivers,

Till they could purl only of grief and death!

THE FAUN. My trees were crimson with its cruelty,

My brakes pestilent with its plashing pain!

THE SYLPH. Yea, and my sky was fetid with its
mist,

I could not wing through it . . . but sank and
fell!

[*The Three moan.*]

THE PERL. And I whose task it was to build the
dawns

And call the stars out was so blinded by it,

That letting go all mystery and beauty

I fled from my far ways to safety here!

SOLITUDE [*as all again dissolve, then reappear*].

But who has shed his blood? and why?

THE GNOME [*springing up again*]. Who?
who?

[*Laughs madly.*]

And sent it trickling down to rot on me?

Even on me who hoped by toil at last

To rise out of the earth as fair as these?

Who? Man! the ruiner of all things! Man!

[*He raves. . . . A Silence.*]

SOLITUDE. But know ye what ye say? Has God
not globed

The earth for man? and sent him His own Son?

THE FIGURE-WITH-THE-CROSS. Alas!

SOLITUDE [*quickly*]. Why do you say alas?

THE FIGURE [*lifting its veil*]. I am

That Son!

SOLITUDE. The Christ! it cannot be! not He!

These might be driven by blood-flow away,

But never He!

THE FIGURE-WITH-THE-TORCH. Yet even Him it
hath!

[*Now lifts its veil.*]

For I am Truth, who outcast, too, attest it.

He could not stay, but like to these fair dreams

Quivering here — distenanted of all —

Is driven forth!

THE FAUN. Woe, woe!

THE NAIAD. Ai, woe!

THE SYLPH [*like an echo*]. . . . Woe! . . .

SOLITUDE [*as all sway — through a long silence*].

And what now will ye do, so homeless here?

[*They breathe no reply.*]

What will ye do?

THE FIGURE-WITH-THE-CROSS. I answer for us all.

We shall await — until the tide has ebbed.

SOLITUDE. And then return?

THE SYLPH. Never!

THE NAIAD. Never!

THE FAUN. Never!

[*Their cries flutter up.*]

HE-WITH-THE-CROSS. Children of Beauty, yes!

[*Their cries wane*]. For other place

In all the universe is not prepared

To us, save upon earth and in men's hearts.

For we are healers, cleansers and uplifters,

Hierophants of Love and Hope and Joy,

Or we are naught. And when the tide has ebbed

There will be more of misery and guilt

To wipe away into oblivion

Than ever again shall cling to humankind

Through all the flooding vastity of time.

THE FAUN [*yielding, at length, to these words,
though hopelessly*].

E'en be it then! . . .

THE NAIAD. E'en so! . . .

THE SYLPH. Ai!

HE-WITH-THE-TORCH [*relieved*]. Even so!

[*All huddle again and the darkness begins to
thicken. But before it falls the Cross glows
a moment, then the Torch. Then invisibility
vast and benumbing again resumes all.*]

III

THE RESTORERS

(June, 19—)

[*A verdant hill-side that seems to rise, as if by enchantment, somewhere in the heart of Europe. It is lit by a radiance more miraculously joyful and tender than can ever visit earth, and is covered with flowers and trees whose fragrance floats over it like the essence of dreams.*

Down to its open center come trooping, from a glade behind, all lovely creatures that men have ever imagined. In their midst is the spirit-form of Life, now infinitely a-quiver with new hope; of the Christ, with a new Cross; of Truth, with a fresh torch; of Heredity with the flax of a new

humanity in her hands; and, with them, a multitude of Nymphs, Fauns, Sylphs, Gnomes, and other visions. All are singing with an immortal desire to help restore a continent ravished as no continent has ever been before.

LIFE [*gloriously*].

The last shot is fired,

The last blood shed!

Death has retired —

CHRIST. The world is new led!

HEREDITY. Everywhere, everywhere,

Men are returning

Back from red slaughter

And rapine and burning!

So with new flax

I weave a new race!

CHRIST. And I a new God

In the old God's place!

TRUTH [*ecstatically*].

And I — whose torch

Flame has rekindled —

Will burn away error
And fog and lies!
For Peace, brave Peace,
Their passion has dwindled,
And now a new light
Shall fill men's eyes!

THE NYMPHS [*dancing forth*].

Ai, ai! So give us
A million flowers
And let us scatter them over the vales!
And grain! —
For the slain,
Who lie in the earth,
Who died, died for their fatherlands,
Yearn now to push up,
Into harvest-birth,
Blossoms that spring for their children-bands.

THE FAUNS [*in turn*].

And give us the planting
Of fruitful trees,
Whose shady limbs, from the noontide sun,

Shall shelter the shepherd

And gently ease

The toil of the peasant, never done.

THE SYLPHS [*in the air*].

And give us the cooling

Of winds in the South!

And give us the warming

Of winds in the North!

Let us be master

Of chill and drouth,

Of cloud and tempest and heat, henceforth!

THE GNOMES [*in humble joy*].

And we, who are glad

To feel, no more,

Warm blood trickling

Beneath the ground,

Ask but to whisper

To men the place

Where riches in veins of the earth are found!

For wealth will be needed —

THE NYMPHS. And flowers! and grain!

THE FAUNS. And shade —

THE GNOMES. To give men

New courage again!

ALL. Ai, ai, to give men new courage again!

LIFE [*all radiant now*].

Yea, children of Beauty,

They shall be given!

For now you are more than creatures of joy.

You help the world on —

And that is heaven:

Immortal is such divine employ.

CHRIST. Yea so! it is so!

And now I shall win

The world from its misery way at last.

For these are ready —

And Truth joins in —

THE NYMPHS. To serve, serve,

Till the need is past!

CHRIST. And so my new Cross

Shall blossom with roses,

And never a thorn of it grow to prick

The brow of my lovers,

Till Time closes —

HEREDITY. Or till all poverty, wrong and shame

Shall be as a grief-remembered name!

ALL [*exalted*]. As soon they shall be!

For now we are one

So let us spread over earth, fleetly,

And enter the hearts of men completely,

Till red wars are done!

Let us break cannon,

Let us melt hate —

And mold them into a higher might!

Let us disarm

Wild Fear — and mate

Its courage to faith in immortal Right!

Then let us gather

The wisest of earth

Into a Council, for humankind;
Where not a word
Shall be held of worth,
Save it be spoken world-weal to find!

Save it be uttered
To give the poor
And backward and barbarous right to Life —
Right to be ruled
By a Law, made sure
Through world-consent, against greed and strife!

Right to be fed,
And right to rejoice;
Right to be clothed: and right to love
The raiment of earth —
Each fairy voice
Of all its spirits below or above!

Come then, let us

Away, fleetly!

Much has been done, much is to do;

Let us go sing

Of our task so sweetly

That the old world, sick of its crime,

Shall give its heart for a new!

*[They cease and band by band go streaming
away, melting at last in the valleys under the
sun. And with them the hillside melts and
all the enchantment.]*

HAFIZ AT FORTY

(From his seat by the Caravansary)

I've slipped into the years betwixt the green of
youth and age,

Betwixt the dawn and the sunset, upon life's pil-
grimage.

And well do I love the green yet, though turned to-
ward the gray:

But I do not cry for the flowers of it,

The April-tripping hours of it,

And all the singing bowers of it,

As on I take my way.

At twenty I had nor scrip nor staff, my limbs were
lightly clad;

My food was space — and a girl's face — from
Yazd to Allahabad!

And each, then, did I love — and each is still my
hourly-one:

Though I am not sad for the lips of them,
The clinging finger-tips of them,
Nor for the moonlit sips of them
I took, in benison.

And every road at twenty led me to my Mecca, Joy;
Where Allah might be, or not be: that was not my
employ!

For earth was made, and that was enough: I
walked a Paradise:

Yet not to sigh for the sun of it,
The Sufi visions spun of it;
Or — now — with soul undone of it,
Refuse to pay the price!

For if I was Infidel, as Doctors avow — or worse,
mad;

And if the only Koran I read was the strong heart

I had;

I want no other or better bliss than such insanity!

Though I will not sue for the day of it,

The long wild passion sway of it,

The wine and minstrel way of it,

To come again to me.

For Forty is good as Twenty — to him who loves

the earth.

The bulbul sings a different song, but one as sweet

of worth.

A face is not so fair, then, though fairer is the soul:

So here, by the Caravansary,

Where I may every dancer see,

A quiet seat will answer me

As well, upon the whole.

As well! and youth may laugh at age — for age can

laugh at youth.

And not a sunnier laughter leaps from Joy, than out
of Truth.

Nor boots it *what* our years may be, if laughter is
our friend,

So though, now, it is clear I store

Along my thinning brow two-score,

This will I keep — if nothing more —

A glad heart to the end!

CECILY

She had a laugh
That took Joy by the hand
And made it dance tip-toe.
And her eyes danced
Till laughter out of Grief
Would overflow.

Wild as a spot of sun
Upon a windy day
Her heart was, . . .
Ever at play!

Was, did I say?
Well. . . .

In a padded cell,
Three hundred sixty-three,
She picks the sunbeams now
From off her knee,
And flings them from her and cries,
“ Vile — they ’re vile! ”

VALHALLA

(At a Wagner Concert)

They ride, ride,
The Walküre ride,
On the shriek of the wind.

Wild they stride,
Hoofing the clouds
And striking out lightnings.

I am thrilled, fain
For the next high strain
Of supernal exultance:

Till sudden a pain
Strikes from the sky
The rout and shout of them.

For under earth
I am seeing instead
A million dead.

And never a face —
In that place —
Praises Valhalla.

FAIR FIGHT

Let me strike my foe down,
 If stricken he should be,
Face to face in any place
 Of battle-bravery.
Let our arms be equal.
 And never let me use
Petty vantage-place or power
To smite him from, in a dark hour:
 Rather let me lose.

Or, if chance comes to me
 To shut his worth away
Year by year, from the world's ear,
 With silence or word-sway,

Let me fling it from me,
 Ashamed of coward odds,
And then, avengeless, to him wend
And make of him instead a friend —
 Or leave him to the Gods.

A WIND-MILL

A wind-mill in Belgium, its sails all torn,
And long since stilled
Of their ancient toil,
Keeps coming to my heart, through scenes war-worn :
And I wonder if it stands
In the green low lands
Where the cows come home
At evening?

I wonder if the peasant, who reaped the green grain,
Shadowed in the cool
Of the old gray canal,
Is gone with the Reaper, whose name is Pain,
To the fields of sleep
No sentinels keep —

Since the enemy too
Lies loth there?

I wonder if carillons, with centuried chime,
Swing out on the winds
From the distant town,
And if they are sad — as they tell the time
To the stranger hosts
Who slay the sweet ghosts
Of the land's old peace:
I wonder?

Yet little use it is! For the world is changed,
And if the mill stands
Or the bells still ring,
They voice across the fields a desire estranged:
And the peasant who hears
In the after years
Will never hear the song
They once sang!

TO MY SISTER C. R. S.

(Who died December 7th, 1915)

Through the night darkness, thick as throbbing pain,
Little sister, I come to you again,
Along the same aggrieving iron track
Borne strickenly, under the gray stars, back,
To that long-watched and long foreboding bed —
Where now you lie, dead —
With all your dark hair hushed about your head.

Two nights ago it was I left your side,
Where suffering had swept your veins so long.
Your hands were tossing and your eyes wide. . . .
Harder than death that hurt is to forgive.
There, as I leant, you asked me, " Shall I live? "

And oh, I lied, lied!

Hoping to save you some last torture's wrong.

I lied and made you laugh with gentle jests,
Though oft your hands were wandering to your lips
Where the words broke, because the blind blood
 wrung

The brain, and left the unavailing tongue,
So sure at love's behests,
With each sweet-uttered syllable unstrung.
Starkly the grief of it now at me grips.

I left you — though with scarce a trembling hope
To fight the pity of the pale distress
That I beheld ravage your loveliness:
And now that pity never can depart!
But my premonished heart
Henceforth will cast a fateful horoscope
Over each starry faith at which I grope.

I left: then came the sudden sworded word.
Scarce was I wakened ere it ran me through.

Who voiced it to the vibrant night-wire — who?
Sending electric anguish to arrest
My fluttering prescient heart, that like a bird
Fell strangled in my breast? —
“Died suddenly,” I heard. . . . God seemed dead
too.

Oh little sister — “little” still to me,
Though womanhood with all its ways was yours;
Though death in all his icy majesty
Has set you far beyond me, and immures
Your lips that gave to mine so lovingly
A last forgetless kiss —
Is there requital *anywhere* for this?

Forgive the moan. We live and love and die,
A moment tread earth, then the starry sky
Is pulled above us — an eternal pall.
Yet prooflessly we know that is not all!
So when I bend above your coffin there

My slain faith shall not fall
Into the dust with you, but rise more fair.

Wherefore the sacredness of this my grief
I give in part to such imperfect song:
That I may not life's cruel seeming wrong
Too much, and rend God, out of disbelief.
A little truth we know, but not enough
Faith's mystic flame to snuff.
For hope then, not despair, must we be strong.

OLD WANTS

The lightning's tide in the west surges,
Foams, far, through the clouds, and dies.
The dim hill-wood in its wake emerges —
Then in darkness lies.

The wind in the leaves and one lone cricket
Leaven the sullen night with sound.

And slowly, slowly the East urges
The moon to her pale round.

*And I wish I knew, as the stars know, I wish I
knew where peace is found.*

The valley lights with homely burning
Sadden the gloom, and numb far rays
Of a wan train are wanly turning
Toward unreckoned ways.

The windy fire-fly constellations

Beaten to earth lie wet and still.

And a sudden meteor, heaven-spurning,

Seems its life to spill.

*And I wish I knew, as the dead know, I wish I
knew God's utter will.*

TRANSMUTATIONS

A clock struck in the night.

I followed its soft vibrations through the darkness,
Through the earth's shadow that gives the earth rest,
And out, on the ether of interstellar mystery, to a
star,

So wistful, and so human, in its effulgence,
That the light of it seemed music,
Sinking mutely harmonic into the soul,
With vibrance incommunicably sweet!
And I wondered what strange waft of things, hid-
den and unassayed,

Dear things I know not even how to dream of,
Was drifting to me from its planet-deeps. . . .

But not for long wondered, for there was answer —
A sudden swift flooding of revelations:

The reason of all beauty coming to me,
And of that strangeness which is beauty's soul.
And the answer was — in words softly illuming:
Starlight is not indeed starlight alone,
Its every beam is resonant of the reaching out of
beings,
Whose thought or deed transmuted in its ray
trembles to you:
And the moon — though but an ash — has memories.
Out of the flowers around you in the darkness
Comes scent — but more: immortal fragrances,
Blown somehow from afar across infinitudes,
To tell you through the voiceless lips of blossoms,
That sweet souls flower in worlds beyond your world.
Out of the river's flowing sibilance,
Its watery wistfulness,
Cool floats to you — but in it there is more:
A distillation of distant passions ended,
Passions of thither space — that were akin to those
of yours.
And the dim beat of Time —

*Which is but numberless wings flitting backward,
Invisibly backward through you, bearing word of
you to God —*

*Leaves in its wake the breath of the Universe —
Which ever astream they cross —
The warm immanent touch of The Eternal.*

This I heard — as a clock struck in the night.

POETIC EPIGRAMS

(After the fashion of the Japanese)

1

HOPE

Up from the lake the crane
Lifts lonely wings —
Like hope reborn again.

2

THE YOUNG MOON

The young moon is so shy
She slips away
Ere stars half fill the sky.

3

THE FAITHLESS

A church-bell in the dawn:
But, like the dead,
I too — alas! — sleep on.

4

GHOSTLINESS

Whose touch, ancestral, far,
Flits through me now,
Like light from a dead star?

5

AUTUMN SADNESS

From griefs no hope could numb —
All the world's grief —
Does Autumn sadness come.

6

PILGRIMS

My soul wears like the snail
Its body-house:
And fares with pace as frail.

7

HOLY ORDERS

Clear rosaries of dew
Night strings upon
Each priestly praying yew.

8

LOVE LETTERS RETURNED IN SPRING

How many petals fall!
Yet in my heart
They once were growing, all!

9

AGE AND DEATH

My fire has burnt so low
That he who knocks
Is not a guest, I trow!

10

THE DEAD THINKER

In the slow silent hearse
He takes his way
Home to the Universe.

SPRING HAD LOST HER WAY

On the hills a want hung, Spring had lost her way,
All the buds were saying it, day after day.

All the buds were saying it, sheathed to the mouth,

That April, April,
Fickle heedless April,
Wayward wanton April
Was lost in the South!

All the buds were saying it, "Spring has lost her
way,

And leaves us to the North Wind, day after day!

Leaves us to the North Wind: naught can we do —

Till April, April,
Cruel careless April,

Fickle heedless April

Shall find her way through! ”

Hourly did they say it. But now through the leaves

Violets are purpling up, as earth's heart heaves.

Violets are purpling up, by the happy rills —

For April, April,

Fairy-footed April,

Leafy laughing April

Has come, along the hills!

THE SALE

(*In Samurai days, Kyoto*)

Please to come in. That is my daughter,
With blue sleeve's embroidered *mon*.
“Pretty”? . . . We of the guest breathe praises
In Japan — not of our own.

So should I speak of the lotos-blossom,
Or of the cherry, she would blush.
It is immodest to praise beauty
In our children: so I hush.

Yet I will sell her — you are thinking? —
To a stranger? for a year?
Please to have tea. In this my country
Many things like that are . . . queer?

It is perhaps so. Please to drink still
My unworthy tea.— The price?
Will you not have her dance and play first?
Koto music you find nice?

After you buy her? — Then, three hundred,
For one year — three hundred yen.
Here is the ink, to sign agreement:
You shall read it once again.

No? — Then I sign it: and the money
You will give now to my hand.
She is my daughter: as the willow
May be swayed, at your command.

And with the money I buy pleasure?
On your tongue that is the word?
In Japan . . . revenge is sweeter:
We spend first upon the sword.

That I will buy: and then, to-morrow,
Secret entrance to my foe:
And in his entrails. . . . It is different
In your country.—Do you go?

THE IDEALIST EXPLAINS

Half way up the mountain, let me turn and look
again,

Yonder is the village, in the valley's peace,
With its simple spire of faith — now almost mis-
took again

For a place to bide in, through a life of ease.

Why have I gone climbing, over pass and precipice,
Up into the cloud-chill, over snows defied?
Must I reach the utter height? Is my striving less
a piece

Of immortal passion, than of mortal pride?

That I can not fathom: I have only dared to scale
Brink and barren glacier, toward the very stars;

And it shall not matter much, whether I have fared
to fail,
Whether vision, from so high, its own beauty
mars.

For I shall have reached it — reached the proudest
verge of all,
And if there I perish, bringing nothing back,
Say of me at least that I obeyed the noblest urge
of all:
Climbed and did not cower, sought and did not
slack.

IN A GORGE OF THE SIERRAS

No myths have ever kept this place;
Too wild it is even for Pan;
And for a nymph's or oread's grace
It was not wooded — nor for man.

The fiercest of the mænad rout
Would here be hushed by the strong spell
Of primal solitude; their shout
To silentness it soon would quell.

For towered ages shall be born,
Decay and fall and be forgot,
Ere feral terror shall be torn
By any power from this spot.

Earthquake and avalanche alone
Could tame it: but the Immanent
Forbids — and keeps it for a zone
Of refuge when His Soul is spent.

THE SALVATION ARMY

(An impression)

The whirr and hum of the city scene,
The sudden drum and the tambourine,
The shrill hymn, to clapping of hands,
And faces grim with the dark demands
That Hell's despair be shunned.

The solemn crowd — curious, wild;
The bloated rowd, and the vendor's child;
The lone boy from his homeland hill
And the shop-girl, toy of Desire's will —
All gazing, silent, on.

The loud-pitched prayer, the frenzied appeal
To hearts that stare at the pleader's zeal.

And then — then — God help His world! —

Onward into the night they 're whirled. . . .

Unto what separate end?

THE GRAPES OF GOD

The vines of God grow over the world,
The grapes of God are slowly ripened,
Pity and Hope and Truth they are,
And Beauty, His sole dream of stipend.
The vines of God grow up through the years,
Into the countless hearts of men,
And the wines of Beauty, Hope and Truth
Are poured again and again.
For Truth must give to the world its way,
And Hope must give to the world its strength,
And Beauty must be the world's delight,
And Pity must prove, at length,
That aware of our misery and need,
God means to grow, immortally,
Over the fields of the Universe,
Soul-fruits to set us free.

A PAINTER — OF HIS DEAD RIVAL

Could I spit upon his tomb
And wash his fame out, I would do it.
Could I then his flesh exhume
And add more worms to burrow through it,
I would do it.

Could I get at every heart
That holds love of him, I would break it.
I would find some murder dart
Of mockery to pierce and shake it,
Then would break it.

Could I then be made to cry
Reasons for it, all I'd say is,

“Fools! he was sublime, and I

Was to him as night to day is —

That my say is! ”

A WIFE, UNLOVED

All that a man should be, you say,
To her, the wife he chooses,
My husband is: all — with his grace
And unforgetting care.
Yet could you know the pangs of one
Who weds for love — and loses!
And how, then, jealousy but finds
Betrayal everywhere!

For, does he touch another's hand?
Unfaithful to me is he!
Or does he glance at a fair face?
At once my tortures start!
And I am anguished lest his thoughts
With many such are busy;

Or lest, concealed from me, he keeps
A harem in his heart.

A harem where a hundred pass
And leave their beauty to him
As dreams that glide with lovely limbs
Behind his screened desire;
For so did I pass once — and so
All women may pass through him
Whose glance or word is exquisite
With passion's subtle fire.

Such is my fortune — such the fate
You envy: for I wedded
Ere I had won him, so have been
But as a concubine
Like any. Ah God, who hast made
The heart and there embedded
The mysteries of love, I pray
That he may yet be mine.

SONGS TO A. H. R.

I

SWALLOWS

In a room that we love,
Under a lamp,
Whose soft glow falls around,
We sit each night and you read to me,
Through the silence soul-profound.
And black on the yellow frieze of the walls
The swallows fly unchanging;
Round, round,—yet never around,
Ranging,—yet never ranging.

We sit and you read, your face aglow,
While amid dreams that start

I watch the swallows
As each follows
The other, swift, apart.
Till oft it seems that your words are birds
Flying into my heart,
And singing there, and bringing there,
Love's more than artless art.

So never, in lands however far,
Or seas that wash them round,
Shall I see wings along the sky
But instantly the sound
Of your voice shall come,
And the sky, changing,
Shall be the room we love,
With its lamp-glow — and time-flow —
And happy swallows ranging.

II

IN A DARK HOUR

You are not with me — only the moon,
The sea and the gulls' cry, out of tune;
The myriad cry of the gulls still strewn
On the sands where the tide will enter soon.

You are not with me, only the breath
Of the wind — and then the wind's death.
A shrouding silence then that saith,
“Even as wind love vanisheth.”

You are not with me — only fear,
As old as earth's first frenzied bier
That severed two whose hearts were near,
And left one with all Life unclear.

III

TWILIGHT CONTENT

Is it the wind in trees or waters falling?
Is it the canyon-shadows rushing down
The ridgy slopes that seem so to be calling
My heart in twilit tenderness to drown?

Is it the canyon-wren's diminuendo
That slips down a soft scale of minor peace?
Is it the spell of night's lone wide crescendo
Of mountain rest upon me — is it these?

Or but some sense of you I cannot measure?
Some memory of a wind of love that blew
Out of your heart to mine? Some darkling pleasure
In the first shades of grief I shared with you?

I cannot tell. I only know how surely
In you — and the world's beauty — I rejoice.
The wren is still: gone to her rest demurely.
The night has come — yet silence is your voice.

IV

TOGETHER

Around us is the sea's dance,
And the glad, swinging flight
Of wild windy gulls whose joy
Is never to alight!

Above us is the June sun,
And higher still the Blue —
And God, like a dream, dear,
The whole world through!

THE SONG OF MUEZZIN ABOW

I wake at dawn and fling sleep from my eyes.
The shade of Allah still is on His skies.
Ere He shall lift it and let forth the sun
My feet up the steep minaret have run.
Allahu akbar! 'llah il Allah! Allah!

And there, leaning expectant toward the East,
I watch the first rays like a holy yeast
Shoot through the heavy sleeping loaf of earth
And quicken it again to a new birth.

And me they quicken to an ecstasy,
Till heaven like a mighty Mosque I see,
And Allah in it, the most high Imam,

Whose word has made me all I was and am.

Allahu akbar! Allah! 'Ulah il Allah!

And so at noon, and so again at night
I mount with all the soul of me alight,
And His Perfection to the four winds cry —
And so would do, so only, till I die!

And after death! for there, in Paradise,
Let others have pale houris as the price
Of their devotion to the Prophet's fame:
A minaret for me — and Allah's Name!
Allahu akbar! 'Ulah il Allah! Allah!

TIDALS

Low along the sea, low along the sea,
The gray gulls are flying, and one sail swings;
The tide is foaming in; the soft wind sighing;
The brown kelp is stretching, to the surf, harp-
strings.

Low along the sea, low along the sea,
The gray gulls are flying, and one sail fades;
The tide is foaming out; the soft wind dying;
And white stars are peeping from the night's pale
shades.

A CHILD AGAIN

(In the country)

When winds grieve in the willow
And fireflies flit about,
When the owl forsakes her pillow
In the dead tree and wings out,
To hoot, hoot, and halloo,
At the watch-dog in his kennel,
When the beetle beats at the window,
And frogs croak in the fennel,—
I become a child once more,
Forgetting the years between,
And ancient cares drop from me,
Gray ghosts of griefs I have seen.
And instead comes mystery to me,
As in the long-agoes:

And I only lie and listen —
And know what a child knows.

Know what a child foresenses
Of life and death and God,
When his young heart commences
To gaze, first, from the sod
At moon and star and planet
In the dark deeps above him,
In the night that seems too silent
And aloof from him to love him.
That seems so vast and vaulted
And eternal to his soul,
That a trembling prayer slips from him —
A first immortal toll
The Infinite takes from him
To ease his unborn pain.
When winds grieve in the willow
I am that child again.

SANTA BARBARA

Santa Barbara by the sea,
 You can give me bliss of senses,
Balm of heart and euphrasy,
 Peace of mind in all its tenses.
You can give me palm and pine,
 Side by side in sweet consentment,
Air can pour to me, like wine,
 From your sky-cup of contentment.
You can give me every flower
 Eye has thrilled to; every scent
Magic sun and soil and dew
 For delight have meant.
You can give me these, and more,
 In one swift enchanted whole,

But you cannot give to me
What I need — my soul.

For your mountains blue and dim
Do not know the touch of sorrow.
From your sea-horizon's rim
Fear of storm I can not borrow.
And when twilight shadows fall
Softly down your sloping canyons,
Even then I do not call
Moon and star for my companions.
For no loneliness I feel,
And no thought of death can come,
In a land Spring never leaves,
Where no bird grows dumb.
You can give me life — yea, too,
Lethe, that may be life's goal,
But you cannot give to me
What I seek — my soul.

THE HOUSE OF LONELY LOVE

There are three pines about the door,
No bird will light in save the crow,
Or the chill-hearted monkish owl,
Whose eyes peer out beneath his cowl.

Ascetic through the silent night
He keeps it; while the scornful crow
Its desolation keeps by day —
Its gloom . . . where passion once held sway.

And blood-guilt is the cause men give
Of its forsakenness and rack:
Love here once cut its own white throat;
And Nature thus has taken note.

And yet for no unfaithfulness
Or perfidy did the two die.
But so dull were they, each preferred
Murder at last to make a third.

For all was solitude — with naught
To save love from its own sick self.
Fearful was either of a friend —
Lest ennui for but one should end.

So the deed fell: and the lone house
Seems now by one sole caution stirred:
“Two cannot love who love no third,
Or live on love’s one sating word.”

IN THE SHRINE OF ALL

The shadows make their evening bed
 To eastward of the hill,
And sleepily and silently lie down.
The vespers of the wind are said,
 And all the leaves are still:
High stars begin the nave of night to crown.

The frogs take up their vigil — like
 Young acolytes whose voice
Is yet untrained to holy harmonies.
Their chants across the darkness strike,
 As strangely they rejoice
Under the stillness of precentor trees.

Cathedral of the Immanent

Seems the night-earth: and we

As High Priests of a Beauty naught can quell.

Nor shall our faith in it be spent

Till we no more can see

With soul, as well as sight, its starry spell.

A TIMELESS REFRAIN

So little there is to remember —

And so much to forget!

We come to the earth and go to the earth,

Paying the primal debt.

And why we have come we know not,

Where go, none can decide.

For the door of Birth and the door of Death

Are dark on the outer side.

So little there is to remember —

And cling with longing to —

That not unwilling are we, at Death,

To pass, with nothing, through.

MIGRATION

With frozen feet the wild geese
Take their way at dawn,
So cold has been the night lake,
So shelterless the shore.
They honk against the sky,
In the dim gray withdrawn.
I wonder if they know why
Their wings are driven on.

I watch them as they vanish;
I watch them in my heart
Long after — and their plaints,
That fall, thin and far,
Seem echoes of the sighs

Of souls bid to start
Across wan chill skies
For Death set apart.

A MAID, DYING

Bury me by the light of the moon,
The sun would be too strong.
Bury me by the light of the moon,
And let me sleep long.
For since as the moon's my life has been,
A semblance of the day,
By the pale lonely light of the moon
I should be laid away.

Bury me by the light of the moon —
And with no rose above,
But only the lily: for my heart
Has never known love.

And a flower of death the lily is,
Of death — and chastity:
So by the lily light of the moon
Should my last shrouding be.

ON THE CAMINO REALE

(*California*)

Here are the sea and the mountains,
Floating clouds and gull-pinions;
Here the far ships pass
Upon their mystic way.
Here the winds hold mass
With all their myriad wave-minions,
Surging along the shore
With loud intoning sway.

Here are the sea and the mountains,
Shriving palms and sun-gladness;
Here, like acolytes,
Sweet incense-flowers fill
The sky's blue nave; and nights,

Like days, are free of soul-sadness;

For all earth is aware

Of Nature's wide good-will.

THE WIVES OF ENGLAND

Like running waters flow our hearts
In sorrow now away,
Though all the hills together
Are shining in the dew,
For they who walked with us last year
Now lie beneath the clay,
And April joy shall come no more
To gladden us — or May:
But grief, now, and gloom, with every weather.

Like running water flow our hearts
In hungering and pain,
Though bonny lambs are bleating
And little birds are loud,
For none have we to share with us

The sun — that shines in vain!
That falls upon the heather as
A lone and sterile stain —
To sicken us with heartache and defeating.

Like running waters flow our hearts,
Toward a bitter sea.—
O what is old as sorrow,
But joy that sorrow slays;
But life that cannot keep from death
Its own, with any plea,
Or save — from the grave — all
That gives it verity;
Or find true content in hope's to-morrow!

THE TILLING

The dull ox, Sorrow, treads my heart,
 Dragging the harrow, Pain,
And turning the old year's tillage
 Under the soil again.
So, well do I know the Tiller
 Will bring once more the grain:
For grief comes never to the strong —
Nor dull despair's benumbing wrong —
But from them spring a hidden throng
 Of seeds, for new life fain.

So heavily do I let the hoofs
 Trample the deeps of me;
For only thus is spirit
 Brought to fecundity.

But when the ox is stabled

And the harrow set aside,

With calm I watch a new world grow,

Sweetly green, up out of woe,

And, glad of the Tiller, then, I know

He too is satisfied.

A LOVER, TO DEATH

You have torn from me, Death, mother and father,
sister and brother and friend.

The earth opened, the earth closed: grass grew —
and that was the end.

For still in the voids you left did sun and moon
their rays disperse.

But *one* there is you could take from me — and
leave no Universe.

METAPHYSICAL SONNETS

1

SPACE

“Space is not real,” say the terrified,
Who face the awful and unfathomed skies
That seem our finitude so to deride
With a great overwhelming, “Space is lies!
Yea, it is lies, and so shall not abide:
For God Himself its deeps could not endure
Stretching beyond Him, infinite, unsure,
Beyond Him and beyond on every side!”

And yet they know Space could not pass away —
Space and the constellated Universe.
To think it is no more to be averse
To waiving any truth that life may say;

Yea, is no more to trust that sense, within,
Which tells us God is and has ever been.

2

TIME

“Time is not real,” say they who would flee
The fear that Time immeasurable streams
Forever through the Universe — a sea
Which flows from past to future, “Time but seems!
Yea, it but seems, and cannot truly be,
Else far without the Mind of God its tide
Would He behold sweeping beyond Him, wide —
And that assertion with absurdness teems.”

Again folly! Time is the mate of Change,
Wedded to it wherever aught may be,
And who denies it true reality
Denies not only all events that range
Atom and Universe — but to God’s Mind
Itself, movement or life of any kind.

3

EARTH

“Earth is not real,” say they who revolt
From Matter as the mindless source of all,
“Earth — and the stars that through the vast void
bolt,

But which, were there no seeing eye, would fall
To non-existence like such dreams as moult
Their pinions and wane into nothingness:
For Earth is but Mind-stuff, nor would be less
Than Mind did Matter vanish past recall.”

Folly once more! For Mind is never known
Unknit to Matter — nor conceivable;
The Universe God never can annul
And change to immaterial Mind alone.
Seen and *Unseen* are they, and so must be —
Fulfilling their primordial Destiny.

4

MIND

“Mind is not real,” say the science-bound,
“Not immanent in the material whirls
Of suns, dead and unborn, that ether round
Itself forever infinitely unfurls.
Mind is not real, but is foam that Chance
Has flung up, phantom-like, out of the Force
Which gives the Universe its aimless course —
Its weltering through vain seas of circumstance.”

Once more untrue. For Mind eternally
Has been wherever Matter found a place.
To but one atom fix it in all space
And you have fixed it to infinity.
For past imagination's pale it lies,
That skies are and not God within the skies.

5

ERGO

Therefore Existence ever is fourfold,
Nor can be otherwise to man or God
Than Mind and Matter inseparably unrolled
Through Space and Time: — for all Change so is
shod

That no event can tread in Space untimed,
In Time unspaced, in Mind or Matter alone;
And all that ever was or shall be known
Has chanced in these — has through and through
them trod.

No more then, in Philosophy, of those
Who dream of spaceless immaterial Mind,
Or mindless Space and Matter — both are blind
And to the truth of life untrusty foes.
For body and soul are we, and so shall be,
Like God and Universe, eternally.

TO THE MASTERS OF EUROPE

Heart-deep in blood, and wading deeper still,
Hear this, O ministers and lords and kings!
They are not mad with vain imaginings
Who warn that you must soon prepare to will
World-peace in some all-sovereign Parliament —
Sceptered with every land's divine consent —
Or rip the Future's entrails with such wars
As very Vengeance utterly abhors.

Choose then: A High Court of Humanity,
Where all forego that all may gain their right,
Or still this Feudal-Hell's Insanity,
That shall leave life no worth for which to fight.
Choose! for the ways have led you now to this:
Brave Reason — or blind Anarchy's abyss.

THE THRESHING FLOOR

What is life but a threshing-floor,
The flails of Fate and God pass o'er?
Flails of Fate, crushing the grain
Too often with their bloody beat,
And the flails of God, passing again
And yet again amid the wheat,
To sever it from the chaff and cheat?
What is life but a threshing-floor?
What is death but life made o'er?

A LITANY.

I call Thee not Infinite Love,
For unbeloved vast millions go;
Nor Infinite, Eternal Truth,
Since half our faiths of falsehood flow.
I call Thee not Omnipotence,
Who still let degradation be;
Nor yet Omniscience — else thine eyes
Most vainly see!
I call Thee not Divine — if so
I must bow down to Thee in awe;
Nor unrelenting Fate — nor more
Relentless Law.
I call Thee but the World's Great Life,
Who art myself, and fight with me
The spirit-ward, immortal strife
For what should be.

EARTH AND NEW EARTH

By

CALE YOUNG RICE

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It is great art—with great vitality.—*James Lane Allen*.

Different from Paola and Francesca, but excelling it—or any of Stephen Phillips's work—in a vivid presentment of a supreme moment in the lives of the characters.—*The New York Times*.

Many Gods

These poems are flashingly, glowingly full of the East . . . What I am sure of in Mr. Rice is that here we have an American poet whom we may claim as ours.—*William Dean Howells, in The North American Review.*

Nirvana Days

Mr. Rice has the technical cunning that makes up almost the entire equipment of many poets nowadays, but human nature is more to him always . . . and he has the feeling and imaginative sympathy without which all poetry is but an empty and vain thing.—*The London Bookman.*

A Night in Avignon: A Play

It is as vivid as a page from Browning, Mr. Rice has the dramatic pulse.—*James Huneker.*

Yolanda of Cyprus: A Play

It has real life and drama, not merely beautiful words, and so differs from the great mass of poetic plays.—*Prof. Gilbert Murray.*

David: A Play

It is safe to say that were Mr. Rice an Englishman or a Frenchman, his reputation as his country's most distinguished poetic dramatist would have been assured by a more universal sign of recognition.—*The Baltimore News.*

Charles Di Tocca: A Play

It is the most powerful, vital, and truly tragical drama written by an American for some years. There is genuine pathos, mighty yet never repellant passion, great sincerity and penetration, and great elevation and beauty of language.—*The Chicago Post.*

Song-Surf

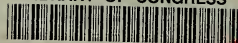
Mr. Rice's work betrays wide sympathies with nature and life, and a welcome originality of sentiment and metrical harmony.—*Sydney Lee.*

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